

Appl. No. 10/086,340
Response dated January 13, 2005
Response to Office Action of September 15, 2004

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8, 15, 17 and 18 are pending in this application. Claims 10-13 and 16 have been previously withdrawn in response to the Examiner's restriction requirement. Claims 9 and 14 have been previously canceled without prejudice. Claims 19 and 20 have been added.

In the Office action mailed September 15, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,479,735 to Martin, Jr. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin, Jr. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,954,083 to Leff et al. Claims 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin, Jr. in view of Leff et al., and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,027,537 to Freeman et al. Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin, Jr. in view of Leff et al., in further view of Freeman et al., and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 2,062,553 to Campos. Claims 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin, Jr. in view of Leff et al., and in further view of Freeman et al.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the courtesies extended by the Examiner in a telephone interview on December 15, 2004. In the interview, the Examiner acknowledged that U.S. Patent No. 5,479,735 to Martin, Jr. does not disclose the structure of the trailer hitch attachment of the present invention, as shown in Figure 1 of the application.

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Applicant respectfully disagrees with all of the rejections in the most recent Office action. Specifically, Applicant submits that Martin, Jr. does not disclose a complementary trailer hitch attachment for mating with the towing hitch of a vehicle. The clamp (12) of Martin, Jr. cited by the examiner could not serve as a trailer hitch attachment. The mating of a longitudinal clamp, such as is disclosed in Martin, Jr., to a round towing hitch ball is not practical. The clamp of Martin, Jr. would have to be torqued down to bite a round ball and in so doing would damage the ball and impede its function as a smooth surface on which a hitch could rotate, which is the hitch's primary purpose.

The clamp of Martin, Jr. is not designed to slide into and be pinned by a hitch receiver. Nor can it be made to clamp onto a receiver without modifying the design of Martin, Jr. Martin, Jr. discloses a vehicle reminder sign for *alerting a driver*. The invention of Martin, Jr. includes a clamp securable to a vehicle lever, such as a gear shift. Martin, Jr. makes no disclosure relating to a sign for viewing by persons outside of the vehicle, particularly a driver immediately behind the vehicle, as in the present invention.

In an effort to more clearly state the invention being claimed, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 15 to recite that the complementary trailer hitch attachment is adapted for being positioned within the towing hitch and receiving an engaging member for connecting the trailer hitch attachment and the towing hitch. Martin, Jr. Martin, Jr. does not disclose any structure that could actually function as a trailer hitch attachment, and it clearly does not disclose a trailer hitch attachment that can be positioned within a towing

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hitch and receive an engaging member to connect the trailer hitch attachment and the towing hitch. As such, claims 1 and 15 are allowable over the prior art. All other claims are dependent upon claim 1 or 15, and are therefore also allowable.

Applicant has added claim 19 that recites further structure of the trailer hitch attachment. Claim 19 depends on claim 1, which is allowable for the reasons stated above. Furthermore, none of the prior art discloses a display support having a trailer attachment with a first aperture for aligning with a second aperture in the towing hitch so that the trailer hitch attachment and towing hitch are connected by positioning the engaging member through the first and second apertures. Accordingly, claim 19 is allowable over the prior art.

Applicant has added claim 20, which recites the first support member and the second support member forming an "L"-shaped support, and the base frame member being perpendicular to the first support member. Claim 20 depends on claim 1, which is allowable for the reasons stated above. Furthermore, none of the cited prior art discloses or suggests an L-shaped support having a base frame member mounted thereon positioned perpendicular to the first support member. This feature offers a superior view of the display to motorists driving behind the vehicle. Accordingly, claim 20 is allowable over the prior art.

For the reasons stated above, Applicant submits that all of the claims are in a condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely notice of

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allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that additional issues remain he is invited to contact the undersigned at telephone number or email address below.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, TECHNOLOGY CENTER: 3600, Fax No. (703) 872-9326 on January 13, 2005.

Signature: Myra P. Howell 1/13/05
Myra P. Howell Date of Signature